

New vehicle is ready to roll

Grant pays for
fire department
rescue vehicle

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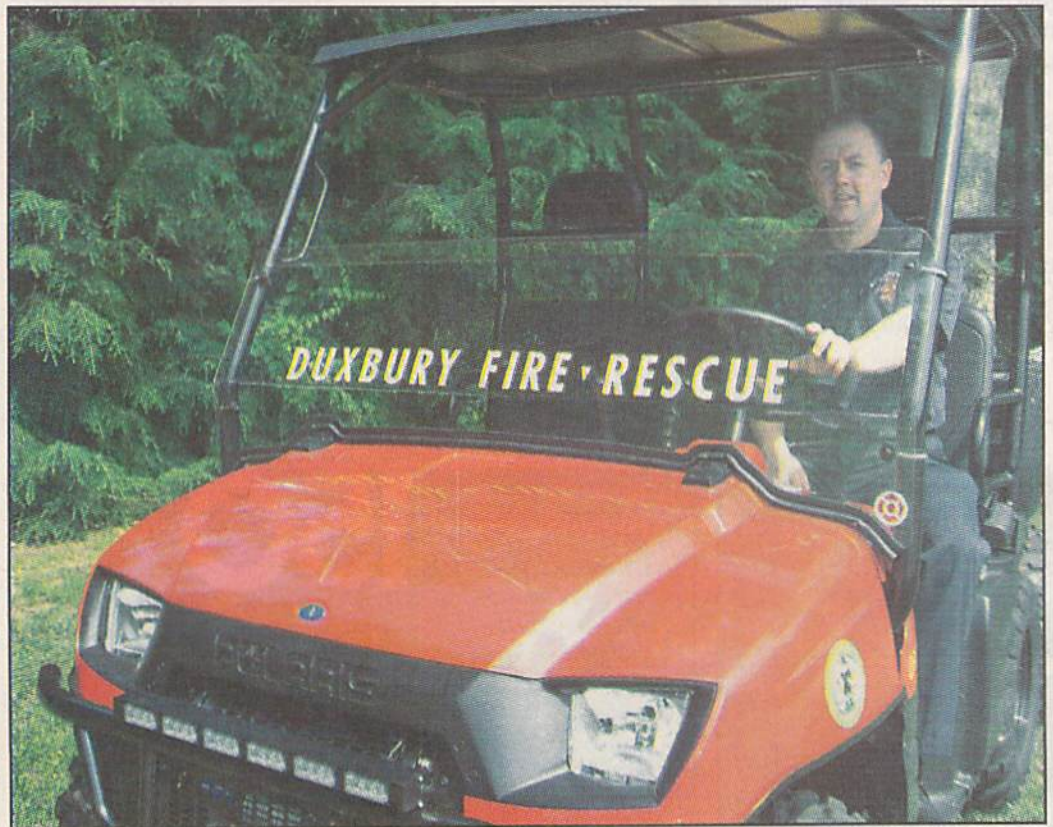
After witnessing several drownings where the attempted rescue was made difficult by the offshore surfaces, Duxbury firefighter Rob Reardon set out in search of a rescue device that would navigate sandy surfaces, rocky surfaces and narrow wooded areas.

With the department's new mini-emergency response vehicle (MERV), he may have found it.

Reardon said thousands of fire departments across the country applied for a grant to secure a MERV through the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company. The vehicle, which costs about \$11,000 to \$12,000, was covered completely by the grant Reardon wrote.

The off-road rescue vehicle (ORV-1) is a six-wheel-drive 2008 Polaris Ranger. The vehicle is able to go at a speed of 42 mph and tow 2,000 pounds. It is equipped with emergency and safety lights and sirens like any other emergency vehicle.

Through a donation from the Duxbury Firefighters Union, the department was able to accessorize the ORV-1 with EMS equipment, basic fire equipment and basic amenities, Reardon said. The unit is equipped with



PHOTO/ANDRIA FARRELL

Firefighter Ron Reardon drives the fire department's new off-road rescue vehicle.

an EMS skid unit, a rollout tray for medical supplies and an intravenous line hookup. The donation from the union also allowed for the purchase of a roof, windshield and dual battery kit. All the accessories were built and installed by Reardon and firefighter Doug Cunningham.

"It is another tool in the toolbox," Reardon said. "When you can get something for free, you can't turn it down. This is a good

deal; many towns didn't get it."

In his narrative as part of the grant, Reardon described some of the scenarios in which the ORV-1 would have helped rescue someone, such as a when a man had a heart attack while wading in the water off of Saquish Beach. The sandy and rocky terrain made it very difficult to get to where the man was, and even more difficult to rescue him, he said. The ORV-1 will also be able to navigate through

narrow areas of the woods where many ponds are located.

"We had some tough calls last year," Reardon said.

Although Reardon said he understands the vehicle would not be used enough to have had the town pay for it, the grant made it well worth it.

"To have something like this is going to be great," he said. "It can be trailed or driven out of the station and go most places where an ambulance can't."